

Preface

Following the publication of our review paper concerned with the interaction of urban spatial evolution and ecosystems in 2008 (Czamanski et al. 2008) we received considerable reactions that included some criticism, doubts and much encouragement. We decided to start a major research project to place the various claims on a sound scientific basis. We were fortunate to receive funding from the Israel Science Foundation and from the government of Lower Saxony. Soon after, we signed contracts to publish two books in a new series to be published by Springer and entitled *Cities and Nature*. This edited volume is the first of the two books.

Our aim was to study the phenomena highlighted in our review paper and to present our results in one book. In particular, we set out to explore the interactions among the evolution of urban built areas, urban and peri-urban agriculture, open space networks and biodiversity. Among other activities, we decided to invite a group of scholars to address the same issues, to explore their findings and to publish them in an edited volume. In 2010 we were successful to obtain funding for an extended workshop to be held at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology in early October 2011. For this we are grateful to the Azrieli Fund. The contributors to the edited volume were asked to present at the workshop their initial chapters. After the workshop the chapters underwent major revisions and review process. The chapters in this volume represent the fruits of this effort.

The participants in the workshops included 11 scholars from Europe and North America. Each participant presented their work and received extensive comments from other participants and the editors. The chapters were submitted and underwent another round of review, comments and corrections. We are grateful to the authors for their willingness to participate in the prolonged review and corrections process. We are certain that the results provide an interesting platform for continued study of the interactions of cities and nature and a worthy foil to our upcoming volume that explores the same issues as a result of our major research effort.

Reference

Czamanski, D., Benenson, I., Malkinson, D., Marinov, M., Roth, R., & Wittenberg, L. (2008). Urban dynamics and ecosystems. *International Review of Environmental and Resource Economics*, 2, 1–45.

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